

Region 4 CAC Meeting Minutes August 6, 2007

FWP Staff – Gary Bertellotti, Fred Schultz, Graham Taylor, Bruce Auchly, Ken Farthing, Roger Semler, Mike Martin, George Liknes, Peg Filipowicz

CAC Members – Jodie Butler, Judie Suden, Mike Labriola, Doug Deffe', Deanna Robbins, James Eling and Joe Schaffer

Guests – Carolyn Sime, Quentin Kujala and Tom Palmer

Gary opened the meeting and went over the agenda and asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Gary handed out copies of the last meeting minutes and the minutes were reviewed.

Old Business/Issues:

Based on past discussions about the structure of our CAC it was affirmed that Joe Schaffer will be the Chairman and Deanna Robbins will be the Vice Chairman. Charles Bocock will represent the Region 4 CAC on the Ft Peck Hatchery Committee.

Moline Conservation Easement was approved by the FWP Commission.

FWP is still interested and working on the Lincoln property up by Shelby. This is a 7500 acre piece of land that is pristine, 14 miles of riverfront on the Marias River that is undeveloped. We found out that the will is being contested by a relative. The property was willed to the Catholic Church but if it is sold, FWP has first right of refusal.

Ulm Pishkun State Park is going through the process of being renamed – “First People’s Buffalo Jump” State Park.

The rumor last meeting that Ackley Lake was being drawn down was incorrect.

New Business:

Fires are our biggest issue right now.

Ulm Pishkun had a grass fire a couple of weeks ago. No damage to our buildings. Sluice Boxes State Park also had a fire last week that burned down some old buildings on private in-holdings but due to early reporting by a passerby and quick response from a couple of Volunteer Fire Departments there was little damage.

Beartooth WMA has lost about 20,000 acres and is part of the Meriweather Fire Complex. That fire is still burning about 20% contained.

Our WMA's on the Rocky Mountain Front, Ear Mountain, Sun River and Blackleaf, will be closed beginning tonight at 12:01 am. This will stop our fencing projects on our WMA's. This is to be consistent with the Forest Service closing all federal lands on the Rocky Mountain Front.

Also discussed the Jocko Lake Fire which is the #1 priority in the nation and also the Fool Creek Fire near Choteau. The Fool Creek Fire is not threatening any FWP property at this time.

Roger Semler gave an update on the \$10,000,000 Governor's Access Montana Program. Dollars are to be used for Parks and Access. We are seriously looking at the Lincoln Ranch near Shelby. This would have some value as a state park and some wildlife programs also. It could be a great floating and camping experience. We are keenly interested in getting some access on the Rocky Mountain Front.

Council Member's Concerns:

Jodie Butler asked about Tunis Reservoir. It has never been dry in over 100 years. Why is it dry in 2007?

Deanna Robbins stated that the State is doing a nice job with the camp ground at Hell Creek. The dam at Ft Peck reduced outflow for a time this spring due to downstream flooding in other states and thus it gained about 2 feet of water.

Doug Deffe' asked about the Governor's Intern program on Science and Math. Are FWP dollars being used? The program needs \$75,000. It is a program to get young people interested in science and math. Several state agencies have been asked to kick in some funds. Unsure what FWP did. Tom Palmer stated that FWP's program "No Child Left in the Woods" is meeting with the Governor's education staff on August 7. Doug asked why this wasn't put through the Legislature rather than asking for dollars from agencies that are strapped for funds? Mrs. Schweitzer, the Governor's wife, is involved with this program.

Mike Labriola said he is hearing a lot of complaints about fishing on the lakes by the Front. He wondered why the fishing hasn't been that good although it was good earlier in the summer. George Liknes stated that fishing is probably affected due to the water levels (low for this time of the year) and doldrums of late summer fishing. This year air temperatures were a lot hotter, a lot earlier than previous years. Gary gave an update on Bean Lake and water leasing to improve conditions on Bean Lake. Nothing new to report at this time. Basically back to square one for the time being. We are looking at legal issues concerning water leases.

Special Program:

Carolyn Sime and Quentin Kujala gave a briefing on the Montana Gray Wolf Program. Carolyn gave an overview of the program and how it is progressing and with the prospect of the delisting of the wolf on the endangered species list how and when our management plan will go into effect and what that entails. Quentin discussed if the wolf is delisted, how are we going to manage the numbers and the possibility of a wolf hunting/trapping season. He discussed season setting issues and processes. Carolyn and Quentin will be going to all the CAC's throughout the state to get their input. Region 4 is the first CAC to be briefed.

After a very informative briefing by Carolyn and Quentin, they asked the CAC members present what are 2 or 3 things that concern them about the Wolf Management Program and the possibility of a season on wolves. Several members were concerned on how this program is to be funded. If federal dollars aren't available, where would the money come from. Concern for the long term program sustainability as to funding. The feds need to continue to help out as it shouldn't fall totally on the state. Other comments were: What is the purpose of having wolves – who wanted them in the first place? Should they be hunted or trapped or both. Trapping has historically been the way to harvest wolves but some members felt that each process should be entertained. They definitely need to be managed due to livestock concerns. Compensation for livestock losses should be part of the program.

Bottom line is that wolves are here to stay and we can't turn back the clock. There is potential for litigation if we do develop a hunting/trapping season.

Next Meeting – Need to poll CAC members – We are looking at Tuesday, October 16th or Wednesday, October 17th. Which one do you want? Let Fred or Gary know ASAP. If we have it on the 16th it will need to be held at another location as our meeting room is being used that evening. The 17th the meeting can be held here, at the Region 4 Headquarters.

Special thanks to Judie Suden for providing some delicious salads for our BBQ.